



Parliamentarians for Global Action
Parlamentarios para la Acción Global
Action Mondiale des Parlementaires
برلمانيون من أجل التحرك العالمي

Parliamentary Platform and Campaign for the Abolition of the Death Penalty

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) is a network of more than 1300 parliamentarians from 143 Parliaments across the world, who in their personal capacity and in the framework of their mandate, support international justice, the Rule of law, democracy and human rights. In 2013, PGA launched the first-ever *Global Parliamentary Platform for the Abolition of the Death Penalty*.

The movement towards the abolition of the death penalty is at a critical moment. While a relative majority of States took abolitionist positions (*de jure or de facto*) and the number of executions has decreased, 64 States still consider the death penalty, with at least 137 persons having been executed in those countries in 2015. The majority of these countries are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Middle East. There is a worldwide tendency in countries that had a *de factomoratorium* to resume use of the death penalty (ex.: Pakistan, Jordan) or to expand the scope of crimes subject to the death penalty (ex.: Uganda, Nigeria). Through drafting legislation and deliberating on national policies, Parliamentarians have a crucial role to play in the movement to restrict and ultimately abolish the death penalty. In addition, the involvement of parliamentarians in public debates can encourage a change in the public opinion in understanding the ineffectiveness of the capital punishment and alternatives to its use.

METHODOLOGY

PGA utilizes a peer-to-peer advocacy methodology (parliamentarian to parliamentarian), to allow for a multi-partisan involvement of the concerned stakeholders to strengthen their understanding of misconceptions about the death penalty and its ineffectiveness in crime prevention and justice. PGA also provides technical assistance and coordinates actions to strengthen the political will for parliamentary initiatives and legislative reforms to overcome the obstacles stalling the process of abolition. The tailored initiatives and activities are structured in such a way as to ensure the “cross-fertilization” between international and national activities.

PGA’s platform works for the ratification of international legal norms prohibiting the death penalty, including the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on the moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

GOAL

A stronger, shared culture of legality and human rights where death penalty has no place and justice is not revenge. Contribution to the abolition of the death penalty worldwide and to the emergence of an international legal norm prohibiting capital punishment through:

- Increased political will to abolish the death penalty and recognise the right to life
- Effective modification of national legal systems (including constitutions) abolishing the death penalty or establishing a moratorium, including through intermediary step such as the reduction of the number crimes carrying the death penalty
- Ensuring the application of minimum standards of use of the death penalty, including the elimination of mandatory sentencing
- New ratifications of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant for political and civil rights (OP2-ICCPR) to ultimately outlaw the death penalty and recognise that the death penalty is a cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment
- Support to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty

A. PGA CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY

Since the establishment of the platform, the Members of PGA directly contributed to actions in favour of the abolition of the death penalty through the world.

- In **Pakistan**, Hon. Naveed Qamar, PGA Executive Committee Member, initiated in the committee to modify the punishment in an anti-rape bill from a mandatory death penalty to discretionary in April 2016.
- In **Malaysia**, PGA held two parliamentary meetings and consultations in 2015 and 3 Ministers, including 2 PGA Members (Minister of Law and Minister of Tourism) publicly committed to abolish the mandatory death penalty for drugs and to make legal reforms for that purpose. PGA provided technical assistance for a draft cabinet paper introducing a bill abolishing the mandatory death penalty for drugs related offences, which will be presented to Parliament in 2016. In March 2016, PGA spoke out against the recent secretive hangings of three men in a [media statement](#) given at a press conference in Malaysian Parliament. The Australian Joint Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade report for the inquiry into [Australia's Advocacy for the Abolition of the Death Penalty](#) spoke highly of PGA's efforts in Malaysia and the Indo-Pacific region saying, "In November... their [PGA] support enabled a workshop of parliamentarians to be held in Kuala Lumpur. It was at this workshop that the Malaysian minister for law announced that the Malaysian government intended to remove the mandatory application of the death penalty for certain categories of crime. We see that as a very good, tangible benefit in our own region."
- PGA held [Consultations on the Death Penalty in Indonesia](#), in Jakarta, **Indonesia** on 24-25 February 2016 during the process of revision of the Indonesian criminal code. This visit brought together MPs and national authorities on how to include safeguards to limit the application of the death penalty, in particular in this reform process which is led by one of our members, Dr. Aziz Syamsuddin, MP, former Chair of Committee III on Legal Affairs.
- PGA held a successful [Capacity Building Seminar for African Parliamentarians on Addressing Child, Early and Forced Marriage](#) hosted by the Parliament of Ghana, in Accra on March 4, where parliamentarians from **Ghana, Tanzania** and **Zimbabwe** participated, and the Ghanaian Chair of the Committee on Constitutional, Legal, and Parliamentary Affairs emerged as a powerful supporter of presenting a Private Members' Bill with bipartisan support that could trigger the Government in submitting a similar legislative proposal to Parliament. A PGA member in Tanzania agreed to introduce a bill abolishing capital punishment through relevant amendments to the criminal code.
- PGA has been working in **Uganda** to support the abolition process launched by two of its members who introduced an abolition bill in Parliament in 2013. The bill, which had passed the first reading, has been presented by MPs Fox Odoi and Alice Alaso to the Legal Affairs Committee on 6 April 2016 [with a supportive submission of PGA Member Hon. Mark Pritchard \(UK\)](#). Partially as a result of PGA's targeted actions in the region, the bill has been welcomed by Members. Due to PGA's work in Uganda, PGA was invited to co-author a Joint Stakeholder Report on the Death Penalty in Uganda for the Second Universal Periodic Review of Uganda, which will take place on 3 November 2016 as part of the 26th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council.
- PGA members contributed significantly to the Abolition of the Death Penalty in **Suriname** and **Côte d'Ivoire** as both abolished the death penalty in their Criminal Codes. In Suriname, this step was proposed by PGA Members, who facilitated a bipartisan, unanimous vote on the reformed Penal Code on 4 March 2015.
- PGA raised awareness of MPs in **Togo** and **Côte d'Ivoire** on the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which was ratified in July 2015 by Togo.
- Through peer-to-peer exchange, MPs in **Tunisia** were sensitized on the issue of the abolition of the death penalty, in particular in the context of the fight against terrorism.
- For more information, please go to <http://www.pgaction.org/campaigns/abolition-of-the-death-penalty.html>

B. TARGET COUNTRIES *(Non-exhaustive list)*

All PGA Members can join the ***Parliamentary Platform for the Abolition of the Death Penalty***, so that PGA can conduct advocacy as well as technical assistance actions (capacity building).

Furthermore, the following countries are part of the ***Targeted Campaigns***:

Africa: Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire (Optional Protocol of the ICCPR), Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania.

Middle East and North Africa: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Yemen.

Asia: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, and South Korea

Americas: United States, Jamaica, and Trinidad-and-Tobago.

C. EVENTS AND ACTIONS OF 2015 - 2016

4 March 2016: PGA organised, with the Parliament of Ghana a Round-Table on the Abolition of the Death Penalty under the leadership of PGA members **Hon. Irene Naa Torshie Addo, MP** and **Hon. Ursula Owufu-Ekufu, MP, PGA Board Member**. During the discussions, experts from civil society, Government officials, the Judiciary and the legal professions joined Parliamentarians from Ghana, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe as well as a representative of PGA's global network to generate a dialogue on the abolition of the death penalty and to share their experiences and the challenges on this important issue.

24-25 February 2016: PGA organised several consultations on the Death Penalty in Indonesia, Jakarta. The PGA delegation was led by **Hon. Aziz Syamsuddin** and aimed to foster a dialogue on the abolition of death penalty and support future actions in this regard. As a result of the discussions, stakeholders from civil society, national institutions and the diplomatic community agreed on the importance of the respect of human rights and the Rule of Law to engage in a debate on the abolition of the death penalty. In addition, some parliamentarians expressed their will to see Indonesia moving away from the death penalty and identified the criminal code reform as a good starting point to reduce its use.

16-17 November 2015: PGA organised a Parliamentary Roundtable and Consultations on the abolition of the mandatory death penalty in Malaysia during which all participating MPs supported moving forward with the abolition of the death penalty. PGA Member **Hon. Nancy Shukri, MP** and Minister of Law committed during the Roundtable to introduce legislation abolishing the mandatory death penalty for drug-related offences in 2016.

7 October 2015: PGA organised a Parliamentary Roundtable and Consultations on the abolition of the death penalty in Uganda during which the Parliamentarians all expressed their support for abolition. Since then and thanks to the leadership of **Hon. Rebecca Kadaga**, Speaker of Parliament and PGA Member, a law abolishing the death penalty was adopted in Plenary Session and sent to the relevant Committee for examination.

10-13 June 2015: Parliamentary Mission in Malaysia in the margins of the Regional Conference on the abolition of the death penalty organized by Together Against the Death Penalty/ECPM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

3-4 May 2015: On 3 May, PGA organized a Roundtable meeting on the abolition of the death penalty in Tanzania and Uganda in Dar es Salaam with the participation of Parliamentarians from Tanzania and Uganda, as well as experts, government officials, NGOs and relevant stakeholders, to enable a peer-to-peer discussion on the issue. In addition, on Monday 4 May, the PGA delegation held a series of bilateral institutional and informal meetings with relevant stakeholders from Government, the Judiciary, Parliament, civil society and the Diplomatic community.

10 April 2015: Participation and intervention of a PGA delegation in the parliamentary workshop on the abolition of the death penalty in Tunisia organised by Ensemble contre la peine de mort, Tunis, Tunisia.

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